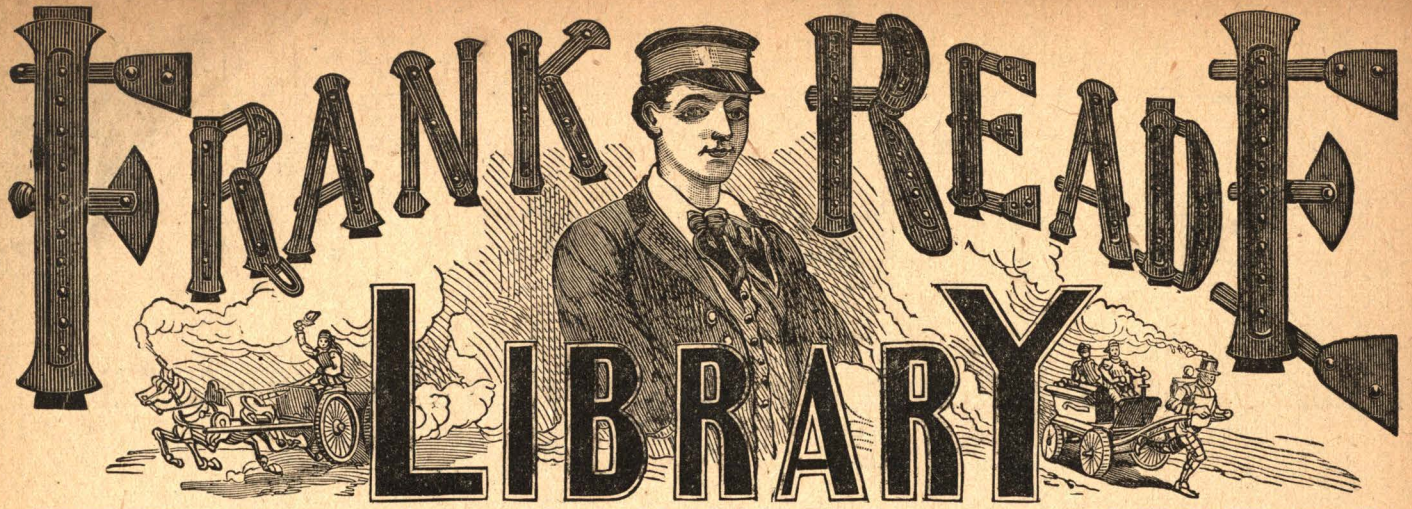


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Under the Yellow Sea: OR, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search For the Cave of Pearls With His New Submarine Cruiser.

By "NONAME."



Swift as a flash it came straight for Frank. But the young inventor nimbly dodged. The big fish passed between him and Sam Bagnall. Its sword would have struck Barney, had not the Celt been quick as lightning. He dodged just in time. But Frank on one side and Sam on the other, gave the fish a fearful blow with the knives.

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Under the Yellow Sea;

OR,

Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search For the Cave of Pearls With His New Submarine Cruiser.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr.'s Prairie Whirlwind; or, The Mystery of the Hidden Canyon, etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

SAM BAGNALL'S STORY.

"I TELL you, Frank, there's millions in it. You see the water is too deep there for the native divers, and there is no doubt but that the Cave of Pearls under the Yellow Sea is no myth but an actual reality."

Sam Bagnall, a close friend and admirer of America's distinguished young inventor, uttered the above words.

Frank Reade, Jr., drew a deep breath and seemed for a moment the victim of powerful emotions.

At the moment the two men were in the office of the machine works in Readestown, where Frank Reade, Jr., constructed all his famous machines.

He had just completed a new submarine boat, which was in itself clear proof that submarine navigation was quite possible.

Sam Bagnall, traveler and adventurer, who had trod almost every nation on the globe, had heard of the construction of the "Diver" and had at once started for Readestown post-haste.

He possessed what he believed was the certain key to a sure fortune.

While traveling in the Yellow Sea aboard a Chinese junk some divers were one day encountered.

They were floating about in sampans, though many miles from the land, engaged in diving for pearls.

It seemed that in this part of the Yellow Sea there were great shallow tracts which were rich in priceless pearls.

But long usage of the grounds had well exhausted the precious gems. But this it was said was simply for the reason that the divers could not go down into greater depths, where they yet existed in plenty.

Report was rife among the divers of a wonderful cave under this part of the sea which was rich with pearls.

In vain the native divers had tried to reach it.

It seemed that the precious wealth was destined to remain forever in those depths, and so Bagnall concluded until he heard of Frank Reade, Jr.'s latest invention.

"A submarine boat!" he cried. "Pshaw! that is just the thing. We have a certain means of recovering the treasure."

So he at once started for Readestown, and thus we find him now closeted with Frank Reade, Jr.

"I like your plan first rate," Frank said finally. "I can see no reason why we should not make our trip in the Diver under the Yellow Sea."

Bagnall was delighted.

"Then it is settled?" he cried, as he jumped up.

"I will consider the matter more fully and let you know."

"I leave for New York to night."

"Very well!" said Frank. "I will wire you within forty-eight hours!"

The famous explorer arose.

"I am so sure that you will go," he said, "that I shall at once make all preparations. But—I have never seen your famous invention!"

"You shall see it!" cried Frank, heartily. "And you are the first outsider to inspect it. Come this way!"

The Reade Machine Works covered a number of acres. It was divided up well into various departments.

There was a large yard, walled in from the view of the street.

Leaving the office Frank and his visitor crossed this.

They came to a gate in a yet higher wall.

Frank pressed a spring and this opened at once. They passed into

another yard, in the center of which was a large basin or tank filled with water.

In the center of this floated a strange-looking craft.

It was the submarine boat.

As viewed now, but little of it could be seen about the surface.

The hull was long and rakish looking. The back or top of the structure was a rounding shell of steel, looking for all the world like a whale lying dormant.

But in this expanse of curving steel there were windows furnished with thick bull's-eye glass, and a pilot house with heavy protected front.

Also, there was a narrow deck provided with a hand rail, and two slight masts rose in the air.

Such was the exterior of the submarine boat. The interior merits a more extended description.

Bagnall stood upon the edge of the tank and stared at the Diver.

"Well, I'll be euchred!" he exclaimed, "it looks like a submarine boat to be sure!"

"Do you think so?" asked Frank, with a laugh.

"Why, I should say so!"

"Come aboard and I will show you something more?"

A plank with a rope rail led out to the boat. Across this the two men now made their way.

Reaching the deck of the Diver Frank went forward to the pilot house.

He opened a small steel door and almost instantly a loud voice cried:

"Howld on, there! Who the devil are yez, an' have yez any roight here?"

"All right, Barney," cried Frank. "What are you doing, you rascal?"

A genuine specimen of the Celt had appeared and was now scraping and bowing before his young master.

Barney O'Shea had been in the employ of Frank Reade for many years and was a valued and trusty man.

"Shure, an' it's you, is it, Misther Frank?" cried the faithful fellow.

"Begorra, I was afraid it was some skulkin' crank thinkin' as how he'd blow up the craft. There's many prowlin' around. Phwat am I doin', do yez ask? To be shure, I'm swapi' the aftther cabin!"

"All right, Barney," replied Frank, "this is our friend, Mr. Bagnall, and I am going to show him over the boat."

"All roight, sor!"

"By the way, where is Pomp?"

The Celt grinned.

"Is it the naygur, sor?" he cried. "Shure he's scourin' up things in the galley this minnit, sor!"

"Good enough!" cried Frank. "Have all in good shape to sail at a day's notice, Barney."

"I will, sor."

"Now, friend Bagnall," cried Frank, "let me show you how the Diver is regulated."

They descended spiral stairs to the cabin.

Here a wonderful scene was revealed.

The interior of the submarine wonder far outshone the exterior.

The long cabin was spread to their view.

It was narrow and necessarily low between decks, but its cabinet work was of the richest mahogany.

No expense had been spared by Frank to make of this a floating palace. He had succeeded well.

There were richly upholstered seats, chairs and divans. Articles of virtu upon beautiful shelves, works of art and of science.

Book shelves with rare volumes, and in fact all the comforts of a millionaire's dwelling.

Next came the dining saloon and this was most beautifully furnished. Rich cut-glass and silver adorned the swinging racks and dresser.

Bagnall took all this in like one in a dream.

Frank led the way next into the compartment where were located the staterooms.

These were six in number, and were nicely fitted up. Next they entered the gun room or armory.

Here were rifles, shot-guns, stands of small arms, cases of cartridges, lances, harpoons, axes, knives, and all the necessary articles of offense and defense for such a trip.

"Wonderful, I must say," cried Bagnall, "but look here, Frank."

"Well?"

"Can you use these weapons under water? You know a bullet will go but a few feet from the muzzle of a gun?"

Frank smiled.

"You know I have overcome that," he said; "the projectiles used in these guns are not bullets."

"Not bullets?"

"No!"

Frank held up a slender article, which looked almost needle like in its proportions. It was some eighteen inches long, but very slender.

"That?" exclaimed Bagnall.

"Yes!" replied Frank, "that is the projectile. That will overcome the resistance of the water."

"But—pshaw! Can those needles be sent with sufficient force to penetrate anything under water?"

"It is not necessary!" replied Frank.

"Ah?"

"They are hollow, and very tightly charged with dynamite. The moment one of them strikes an object, a small needle in the end is shoved back which explodes a tiny percussion cap. Then the needle is blown to nothing by the force of the dynamite. Such a shock, under the water, will knock a whale senseless, even if it does not kill him."

Bagnall was intensely interested.

He examined the new projectile carefully, and then cried:

"Frank Reade, Jr., you are a brick. That is a wonderful thing. What is there that your inventive genius cannot devise? Why there is a fortune in that. You could sell the secret to the government, and reap a big thing."

"Ah, but that I do not care to do," said Frank. "I would not sell any warlike invention to a government. There are cruel devices enough in existence now for the taking of human life!"

Bagnall looked wonderingly at Frank, and rejoined:

"You are not at all like the average man. That is an uncommon sentiment."

"Perhaps so," laughed Frank, "but every man to his own crotchets, you know."

"Oh, yes!" agreed Bagnall.

They now passed into the magazine, and then into the galley where Pomp was putting things to rights.

Bagnall thought he had never seen a smarter looking negro. Pomp scraped and bowed in his comical way, and cried:

"Fo' de Lor', Marse Frank, yo' jest take dis chile all unawares, but yo' am berry welcome, sah, jes' de same!"

CHAPTER II.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE DIVER.

FRANK introduced Bagnall to Pomp, and the two were at once friends.

"You must have everything all ship-shape for leaving Readestown at an early day, Pomp!" declared Frank.

"Law sakes, sah!" declared the darky, rolling his eyes. "I jes' hab ebberyfing fixed in apple pie ordah. I nebber need axe whar we am gwine, sah?"

"Oh, I don't mind telling," said Frank. "We are going to the Yellow Sea."

Pomp scratched his wool.

"Neber mind, sab. Kain't say I jes' knows whar dat am. But I done reckon yo' does."

"Yes," laughed Frank. "It is off the coast of China. You will understand why it is called Yellow when you see it."

"All right, sah. Nebber ax no questions, sah. Yo' jest say wha' yo' want, sah, an' dis chile be gwine to go an' do it, sah, ebbery time."

"All right, Pomp. See that you do so," said Frank.

They left the galley and went aft through a narrow passage.

"No doubt you have wondered what sort of mechanism is employed to make the boat sink and rise at the will of the occupants," said Frank.

"That is precisely what I have been thinking of," said Bagnall.

"Very good. I will very quickly show you."

Frank opened a small slide and a view was had instantly of a large compartment with steel sides and from which there came a cold, damp draught.

"This is the reservoir or tank," said the young inventor. "It has powerful tubes connected with another hydraulic reservoir. By opening certain valves this reservoir instantly fills; that causes the boat to sink. By the mechanism of the hydraulic pressure of the other reservoir the boat will expel the water and rise."

"Well, I'll be blowed!" exclaimed Bagnall, "it would have taken me a lifetime to have studied that thing out."

"Pshaw!" laughed Frank; "that is not difficult. Let us next go into the engine room."

"I will follow where you lead!" said Bagnall.

They retraced their steps to the forward part of the boat.

Then descending stairs, they came into the engine-room. This was lit by incandescent lights.

A wonderful sight was revealed to the visitor. Frank minutely explained the delicate but powerful electrical machinery to Bagnall's edification.

Some time was spent thus, then Frank said:

"One more thing, and you have seen the most of the mechanism of the Diver."

"Its like or its equal does not exist on the face of the globe," declared Bagnall.

"Here," said Frank, putting his hand upon a huge cylinder, "is the machine which enables us to live under water. It is a generator of pure oxygen, and by means of pipes and valves in all parts of the boat, keeps the boat supplied with pure air, at the same time destroying all gases."

"Then you really manufacture your own air?" said Bagnall.

"Yes."

"Well, by Jupiter! If you're not careful you'll be inventing something that will give us all perpetual life."

"You could not complain if I should do that," laughed Frank.

"I don't know about that. I think it is rather pleasant to meditate upon meeting one's friends in the next life."

"There is something in that," agreed Frank; "but now, Mr. Bagnall, you have seen all there is to see about the Diver."

"I am satisfied. Truly, I am the luckiest man on earth."

"Indeed!"

"I am about to undertake a wonderful submarine journey around the globe. Just think of it! A journey under the ocean. Why, that is a privilege which I would not exchange for the throne of a monarch!"

"Ah, but I have not yet agreed to go," said Frank.

Bagnall's face fell.

At this the young inventor laughed and said:

"But don't get disheartened; it is pretty certain that I will go. Indeed—why, I might as well say that I will."

"You will!" screamed the excited explorer. "Ah, I knew that you would! You are just my kind! I know that you'll not be sorry!"

And he fairly embraced Frank.

"How soon can you be ready to start?" asked the young inventor.

"Very soon, I assure you," cried Bagnall. "I will leave for New York to-night; I will return as fast as express trains will bring me."

"Good!" replied Frank. "I will be all ready to start when you return."

They parted a few moments later at the outer gate.

Frank returned to his office, and proceeded to make all necessary preparations for the start.

He was fully determined to go to the Yellow Sea, and if possible to discover the cave of pearls.

That he would succeed in doing this he felt but little doubt.

At once everything became bustle and hustle at the Reade Machine Works.

As the works would be idle during his absence, it was necessary to see that everything was left in good order.

This was a task which occupied no slight amount of time. The next day Frank received the following dispatch:

"FRANK READE, JR.,—Have made all arrangements. Am now on my way to Readestown. All ready to start for the Yellow Sea."

"Yours, in haste,

"SAM BAGNALL."

"All right!" muttered Frank. "We will be quite ready when you get here."

And this prediction came true.

The Diver was all ready for the start, when Sam Bagnall with his trunks appeared at the gate of the machine works.

It had been planned to keep the departure of the Diver as secret as possible.

But in spite of all precautions in some way the affair leaked out, and as the hour drew near for the departure an immense throng of people congregated outside the gates.

The tank was connected by a series of canals and locks with the river which was navigable to the sea.

So it was an easy matter for the Diver to make the start directly from Readestown.

At the appointed hour Frank Reade, Jr., Sam Bagnall and Barney and Pomp went aboard.

The dynamos were humming and everything was ready.

The gates were opened and the Diver glided out into the canal.

Through two locks she passed successively, and then there was a clear course to the river.

The banks were thronged with people. They cheered wildly as the Diver appeared.

Frank and Sam stood on the deck and waved flags.

"They are very demonstrative!" said Bagnall. "What a legion of friends you have, Frank!"

"Yes," agreed the young inventor, "and it is too bad to disappoint them. I believe I will show them what the boat can do."

"By all means," cried Bagnall. "You ought to do that!"

"Step inside, then."

Both stepped into the pilot-house. Barney was at the wheel.

"Barney," said Frank, "press lever Number 3."

Barney did so.

This had the effect of hermetically sealing every door and window on board the Diver.

Then Frank pressed the lever which opened the reservoirs. Instantly the boat sank.

The watching crowd on the shore saw the submarine boat vanish.

It was a wonderful sight, and all watched with suspense to see it come up again.

Its course under water was clearly marked by the glare of the electric lights.

Those on board the Diver experienced not the slightest inconvenience from being under water.

The oxygen generators furnished the passengers with the best and the sweetest of air.

It was indeed a novelty to Sam Bagnall, and he was beside himself with interest and excitement.

Frank did not allow the boat to remain under the surface long.

It came up a few hundred yards from where it went down, and as it sprang dripping from the depths, deafening cheers greeted it.

Once again Frank and Sam appeared on deck.

Then the boat glided on down the current.

Readstown was quickly left behind, and was soon out of sight altogether.

Darkness shut down before the ocean was reached, but this did not impede the progress of the Diver.

The electric search-light sent its pathway of light down the stream for a good distance, making objects plain in its course.

Thus the Diver continued on until at length it was in the open sea.

Frank had set his course for the Cape of Good Hope, intending to thence make his way up into the Yellow Sea.

It would require some months to make this cruise with all the stops they proposed making.

But the submarine travelers were not in any special hurry to reach the Yellow Sea.

They knew that nobody would run away with the Pearl Cave, and that they would find it intact.

So the Diver sailed on all that night.

The next day as all came on deck it was seen that they were in the midst of the boundless tossing sea.

Land was not in sight.

They were sailing smoothly and rapidly and the Diver appeared to be extremely steady and stanch and a good sea boat.

The bracing air was most enjoyable and Sam Bagnall in particular, was delighted with the prospect. Truly a most auspicious start upon a thrilling series of adventures had been made.

CHAPTER III.

EN-ROUTE.

As more rapid progress could be made, Frank preferred to travel on the surface of the sea.

The Diver proved a very rapid sailing vessel, and plowed through the waves like an ocean greyhound.

Day after day passed.

No storm had been encountered thus far. Numerous steam and sailing crafts had been met.

These answered the Diver's signal in a chary fashion, as if afraid of its character.

Which caused a laugh on board the submarine boat.

"They probably take us for a pirate," laughed Bagnall. "To be sure we might set torpedoes under any of these crafts, and blow them out of the water."

"If they knew how harmless we are in disposition," said Frank, "they would not be so afraid of us!"

"You are right!"

But as they sailed on, Sam became impressed with a powerful curiosity to see the bottom of the ocean.

He mentioned this to Frank, and the young inventor said:

"At a good opportunity we will descend and you shall have your wish. There is too great a depth here."

"About what is the depth at this point?" asked Sam.

"Fully one mile."

"One mile?"

"Yes."

"Whew!" exclaimed Sam. "If we ever got down there we'd never get up again!"

"No; what is more we could not descend to such a depth if we wanted to."

"Why not?"

"The pressure of the water would be so great that we should be crushed like an eggshell and float in mid-water as it were, as we should be more buoyant than the water at that depth."

"Enough!" said Sam, with a deep breath. "I am satisfied. I don't want to try anything of that sort."

"Nevertheless, we shall soon be in a more shallow part of the ocean and there we will descend."

"All right!" agreed Sam. "I leave it all to you. You know what is best!"

The next day Frank said:

"Now we are in water which is not quite a thousand feet deep. It is also in an interesting part of the sea. We will descend here!"

With this Frank touched the spring which hermetically sealed every window and door aboard the Diver.

Then he cried:

"Take your last look at the sky for awhile!"

A quick switch of the lever and the reservoir filled. Down sank the submarine boat.

She went down with a gentle motion and touched the bottom in a comparatively brief time.

The shock was hardly perceptible and Frank instantly pressed a key which set all the electric lights blazing.

The momentary spell of darkness was replaced by a vivid light, and now it was a strange and wonderful scene which was revealed to the gaze of the voyagers.

They were at the bottom of the ocean.

It was a wonderful thing to reflect upon, and Sam Bagnall was for a time speechless.

The slides fell from the heavy plate glass observation windows.

The bed of the ocean lay revealed in a bewildering panorama.

As far as the radius of the electric light, all manner of forms of submarine life were seen swimming about in the clear depths.

A bed of clear white sand comprised the bottom of the sea. This was dotted with coral growths and clumps of aquatic plants.

Among these swam fish of all sizes, hues and species.

In the sand were crabs, huge water spiders, octopuses and shell fish of all kinds.

For some moments all gazed upon the spectacle in silence.

Then Barney cried:

"Begorra, it's a foine soight now, is it not?"

"Golly! I don't fink I want dat big crab to get his claws onto dis chile," affirmed Pomp.

"Bejabbers, he'd make yez howl, I'm afther thinkin'," rejoined the Celt.

"Mercy on us!" gasped Bagnall, finally. "Are you quite sure we shall be able to get back to the surface again, Frank?"

This created a laugh.

"Well, we will take chances on it," replied Frank. "What do you think of the bottom of the sea?"

"It is a very beautiful but a very outlandish place."

"Well said! However, we will wait here awhile until you become more accustomed to it, and then perhaps we will take a walk out there!"

"Take a walk out there!" gasped Sam. "What on earth do you mean, Frank? You are joking!"

"On the contrary, I am in earnest."

Sam stared at the young inventor.

"Then I don't understand you?" he said.

"You will, when I tell you that I have diving suits which we can easily put on and then go anywhere out there."

"Oh, I see!" cried Sam, with great interest, "but will it be hardly safe to do that?"

"Why not?"

"There are so many horrible monsters out there; I should fear that they would attack us."

Frank laughed at this.

"We must look out for them," he said. "The majority of them will not trouble us if we are careful."

"Ugh!" exclaimed Sam; "I don't know whether I'll agree to go with you or not."

At this moment a sharp cry came from the pilot house above.

Barney had focussed the searchlight upon a distant dark object in the ocean depths.

It at once showed up as a sunken wreck, and sure that the others would be interested, the Celt cried:

"Och, hone, wud yez come here an' see the soight? Come iver wan av yez! It's a sunken ship!"

"A sunken ship!" exclaimed Bagnall.

Instantly he sprang up the spiral stairs, and into the pilot-house. He saw the distant object at once.

"It is a sunken wreck!" he cried. "Some unfortunate victim of ocean's storms."

"True," replied Frank. "From this distance she looks like a merchant vessel. Shall we go over and take a look at her?"

"Oh, that will be splendid!" cried Sam, eagerly.

Frank at once pressed the reservoir valve softly.

She arose a few feet from the bottom and sailed slowly nearer to the wreck.

The sunken vessel lay well upon its side, and its hull and rigging were badly shattered. No doubt it was the victim of a terrible storm.

The Diver settled down quite near to the wreck.

Then the search-light showed it up as plain as day.

Every detail of the hull was revealed and a thrilling sight was accorded the submarine voyagers.

At one of the ports there lay half over the embrasure a ghastly, grinning skeleton.

For some reason it had failed to become disintegrated, and there it remained, a dismal sentinel.

The sight caused all a shiver, and Sam exclaimed:

"Ugh! that poor devil failed to get out of the cabin in time."

"That was to be his fate!" said Frank, "doubtless there are others inside."

The submarine boat lay easily upon a sort of reef, and after seeing that she was in a safe position, Frank said to Barney:

"Bring out the diving-suits, Barney!"

"All roight, sor!" and Barney disappeared with alacrity. Bagnall shrugged his shoulders.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed. "I don't know as I dare go out there, Frank, I feel a bit shaky."

The young inventor laughed.

"You'll soon get over that!" he said. "You had better go!"

Barney produced the suits at this moment. Frank proceeded to don one, saying:

"I think you can go with us, Barney, Pomp will keep us supplied with air."

"All roight, sor!" cried the Celt, with delight.

This at once enthused Bagnall.

"All right!" he cried. "I am going, too."

"That is right!" cried Frank. "I'll see that no harm comes to you!"

In a few moments all three were equipped for the trip to the wreck. Pomp was an interested spectator.

"It be mah turn nex' time," he said. "Yo' needn't put on sich airs, yo' good fo' nuffin 'fishman."

Barney made a grimace at the darky by way of reply. Then all was ready.

It was necessary to elevate the Diver about forty feet so that there could be plenty of play for the life lines.

The manner of leaving the Diver was by means of an ingeniously constructed vestibule.

This had two doors; one leading into the cabin and the other on deck.

In these doors were apertures for the life lines. The helmets were not adjusted until the divers were in the vestibule.

This was then filled with water by a valve and opening the outer door the divers walked out.

Frank led the way.

It was a new experience for Bagnall and for a moment he felt faint and giddy.

The pressure of the water made fearful noises in his ears, but after a few moments he overcame this.

He followed Frank and Barney to the rope ladder which led down from the boat's deck.

Down this all three climbed and were soon upon the sands below.

There they stood for a moment.

"Well," cried Bagnall, "here we are; now for the fun!"

To his surprise the others did not answer him. Then he suddenly recollected that very likely they did not hear him.

Under water, it would be necessary for them to put the helmets close together in order to be heard.

Indeed at this moment Frank placed his helmet to Sam's, and shouted:

"Are you all right?"

"Yes," replied Sam. "Is this the only way I can make you hear?"

"Yes!"

"That is very strange. What way shall we go now?"

"Keep close behind me and you shall see. I will lead the way."

And this Frank proceeded to do.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUNKEN TREASURE.

BARNEY had already proceeded some distance toward the wreck. Bagnall followed Frank, and in this manner the distance to the wreck was accomplished.

No incident of special interest transpired on the way.

The fishes swarmed about the divers in curious schools, and it being a new experience to Bagnall at times, he was really alarmed, as some of them were exceedingly large.

Reaching the wreck, Barney proceeded to clamber into one of the ports.

The electric light from above made all quite plain in the vicinity.

Frank and Bagnall followed Barney, and all three were now upon the main deck of the vessel.

Even as they entered the open port, Frank saw a dismantled gun, not but a few feet back. At once he put his helmet close to Sam's, and shouted:

"Upon my word, this vessel carried an armament. She looks to me like an old-time type of pirate vessel."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Sam, at once interested and delighted. "Perhaps there is treasure aboard."

"Perhaps so."

"Will it not pay to search for it?"

"Oh yes."

Frank proceeded to adjust his life lines to permit of invading the vessel further, as did the others.

Then leading the way, the young inventor passed along the main or gun deck to the cabin stairs.

Light shone in at the cabin windows from the electric radiance without.

Objects were fairly visible, and a strange sight was revealed. The explorers stood spell-bound.

Along a bench at one side of the cabin, sat six grinning skeletons, just as they had given up their lives in the sinking of the ship.

At a cabin table sat two others, and upon the floor were a couple more. It was a ghastly sight.

But upon the table was a large iron chest, and overturned before it, was a heap of coins.

It required but a moment's examination to show Frank that they were gold doubloons and roubles. It was a large treasure.

The three divers put their helmets together.

"Begorra, we've struck it rich, haven't we?" cried Barney.

"You are right!" shouted Frank. "They were evidently having a division of their spoils when the ship went down!"

"What do you suppose sent it to the bottom?" asked Bagnall.

"That may forever remain a mystery," replied Frank. "Perhaps a storm, but more likely a solid shot from some cruiser."

"Mercy! if that is all gold in that heap it will enrich us!" cried Sam, excitedly.

"Certainly!" replied Frank. "We will devise some way to get it back to the Diver!"

"Begorra, I cum prepared for that, sor!" cried Barney.

"You did?"

"That I did, sor."

And the Celt produced a large leather bag, into which he proceeded to rake a lot of the coin.

It was speedily filled, however. The balance of the treasure Frank placed in the chest cover, and he and Sam carried it while Barney tugged on behind with the bag.

They returned to the gun deck.

Here Frank said:

"Shall we go back to the Diver, or shall we explore further?"

Sam quickly replied:

"Suppose we leave the treasure here and look further through the wreck, we can return and get it when we choose!"

"Oh, certainly!"

So the gold coins were left at the port by which they had entered. Then Frank led the way back to the cabin.

To the forecabin and the magazine the divers went. Dozens of skeletons were found.

It seemed as if the ship must have foundered very suddenly, for many of the victims were seen to have been in the act of accomplishing some duty. They seemed to have been taken unawares by the terrible death which had so swiftly rushed upon them.

With more than ordinary interest the explorers viewed the ghastly scenes.

That the vessel seemed to have been a pirate was certain.

She carried eight carronades and a swivel gun on the forward deck. The timbers had rotted, and this heavy piece of ordnance had fallen through into the hold.

Heaps of rusted swords and small carbines and blunderbusses were seen; but nothing more of value was found.

It seemed that Frank had hit upon the truth in the suggestion that they had been in the act of dividing the treasure when death descended upon them.

There was no way of learning the name of the ship, but it seemed certain that she belonged to a period of buccannery fully two centuries previous.

Again the divers put their helmets together, and Frank shouted:

"Shall we return now?"

"I am agreeable!" replied Sam.

"Begorra, I've had enuff!" cried Barney.

So Frank led the way back to the open port by which they had entered. A few moments later carrying the treasure they were traveling as rapidly as possible towards the rope ladder.

Suddenly Barney threw himself in front of Frank.

He dropped the bag of treasure and the other divers dropped their load as well.

They started swiftly for the ladder. There was good reason for their haste. A deadly peril threatened them.

A strange-looking monster fish which seemed a cross between a sword fish and the shark was bearing down upon them most savagely.

But there was not time to reach the rope ladder.

Frank saw that a battle with the fish must result and he instantly prepared for it.

Turning quick as a flash, he drew a powerful knife from his belt. This he held aloft.

Barney and Sam did the same. The monster fish came down upon them like a whirlwind, but of a sudden with a whirl of its mighty tail it changed its course and described a circle about them.

It was seen to have a powerful long lance attached to its nose, fully as long as the ordinary swordfish.

It was as quick as a mackerel and as wary as a crab.

Several times it flashed about the divers in a circle.

It evidently meant to attack them, but it was seeking a vulnerable point.

It was a moment of suspense for the three divers.

Each recognized the deadly peril in which they were.

If the deadly sword should happen to strike any one of them the result must needs be fatal.

It would certainly penetrate the diving suit and the victim would instantly drown.

But Frank Reade, Jr., did not intend that this should happen if he could help it.

The big fish suddenly changed its tactics.

Swift as a flash it came straight for Frank.

But the young inventor nimbly dodged. The big fish passed between him and Sam Bagnall.

Its sword would have struck Barney had not the Celt been quick as lightning. He dodged just in time.

But Frank on one side and Sam on the other, gave the fish a fearful blow with the knives.

The result was of importance. Blood spurted from the wounds and the monster fish took a shoot upwards, lashing the water into a whirlpool.

The three divers sank down to avoid being swept from their feet. Every instant Frank expected the big fish to come in close contact with his life line and break it.

But luckily he did not.

Whether the big fish went to the surface or not was never known. Pomp on board the Diver saw his body shoot up by.

Then, just as the divers were recovering themselves, Sam placed his helmet close to Frank's and shouted:

"Look out! He's coming down!"

This was true.

Looking upward the heavy body of the fish was seen to come tumbling down. Down it came to the white sands below.

Then it was at once seen to be dead.

The deadly knives had done their work. The great peril was removed.

A hasty look at the monster was indulged in. Then Frank gave the signal pull on his line for Pomp to descend with the Diver.

Down came the submarine boat and rested on the sands. Barney appeared at the pilot house window.

It was now an easy matter for the divers to go aboard.

Barney dragged the bag of doubloons into the vestibule, and Frank and Sam followed with the chest cover.

Then the outer door was closed, the pumps freed the vestibule of water and the three adventurers took off their diving suits.

Into the cabin they went, and Pomp greeted them joyfully.

The darky's eyes shone like stars.

"Golly, Marse Frank!" he cried. "I done gibbed yo' up when I seen dat big fish goin' fo' yo'!"

"Well, it was a close call!" agreed Frank.

"But look at the treasure we have recovered!" cried Sam Bagnall.

"Begorra, it's a foine heap av money!" declared Barney.

The voyagers now became so interested in the lucky find that they forgot all else.

The bag of doubloons was emptied upon the table. Then they were counted and weighed, and the value of the gold estimated.

"It is worth about sixty thousand dollars!" declared Frank after a time.

"Quite a snug little fortune," cried Bagnall.

"Indeed it is!" agreed Frank; "how shall we make the division?"

"Oh, equally!" cried Sam. "We all had a hand in it."

"Are you satisfied?" asked Frank.

"Oh, certainly!"

Frank was about to speak again when a thrilling thing happened.

CHAPTER V.

BARNEY LAYS FOR POMP.

THERE came a sudden, terrific shock as if an avalanche had struck the boat. All the occupants were knocked from their feet.

And the gold was scattered everywhere. But no one bothered their wits about that.

It seemed as if some terrible accident had befallen the Diver.

When the voyagers regained their feet, Frank rushed to the observation window.

What he saw gave him a thrill.

A tremendous deep sea whale nearly as big as the boat, had struck the boat, and finding an antagonist had come about for another trial.

"My God!" cried Sam, in notes of alarm. "We are lost!"

"If dat ar whale strikes dis boat agin we is," averred Pomp.

And, indeed, so it looked to everybody. The monster was preparing for another charge.

Frank Reade, Jr., knew how desperate the situation actually was. If the monster should charge headlong against the boat again he would be apt to crush it.

So Frank acted instantly.

With one leap he was in the pilot-house. Quick as a flash he seized the wheel and brought about head on to the whale.

Now the Diver had a very sharp ram. Should the whale try conclusions with that he would be lost.

On came the monster full speed.

When he struck the point of the ram—well, everybody knew that something had happened.

There was a terrific shock, the Diver quivered like an aspen, then began to heel over.

"Sink her, Barney!" cried Frank, who had been hurled down the stairway by the concussion. "Let her go to the bottom, quick!"

The Celt had been at Frank's shoulder all the while.

He had also been hurled to the floor of the pilot-house.

But he was instantly upon his feet and rushed to the key board. Quick as a flash, he pressed the reservoir lever.

The Diver sank and lay half upon its side.

That was a trial moment for its staunchness, for the whale impaled upon the ram was thrashing furiously and threatening the boat with destruction.

But this was only for a moment.

The huge monster suddenly ceased its violent actions, and lay inactive upon the bottom of the ocean.

It was dead.

The ram had penetrated a vital part to the depth of fully ten feet. The great battle was over.

The voyagers had now recovered, and all rushed to the observation windows.

"Whew," cried Sam Bagnall, "if we are going to run up against such snags as that right along, I think we had better keep on the surface."

"He is a monster!" declared Frank. "I never saw a bigger whale."

"Begorra, it's lucky he didn't strike the boat broadside on agin," declared Barney.

"Golly, I don't flink we am rid ob him yet, chile," answered Pomp. This was a fact.

The ram, thrust so deep into the whale's head, held the boat. Frank put on all power and tried to back away.

But it was of no use.

The ram evidently was stuck in the monster's skull and was immovable on account of the immense weight.

Here was a predicament.

They were hopelessly anchored for a time at least at the bottom of the ocean.

This would not do.

Frank at once turned to Barney and said:

"Bring out the diving suits, Barney. We must cut away from that obstruction."

"All right, sir!"

"Hi, Marse Frank, won't yo' let dis chile go out too, sah?"

"Yes," replied Frank; "Sam and I will stay aboard. You and Barney can do the cutting away."

With alacrity the two at once set about their task.

In a few moments they had donned their diving suits and quickly left the cabin.

Equipped with axes and blubber spades, they speedily got to work. It was nevertheless no small task.

However, they finally succeeded in freeing the ram and returned aboard.

For a time the voyagers had a sufficiency of submarine adventure, and Sam Bagnall cried:

"Let us go to the surface, Frank. This may be all right enough for those that like it, but I've had enough. Wait until we get to the cave of pearls."

Frank laughed at this.

"You don't hold out very well," he said. "I am afraid you would not be a success as a submarine navigator."

"I dare say not," acknowledged Sam—"at least, I have had enough."

"Very well; we will go to the surface."

However, Frank let the Diver run a few miles under water, and then opening the reservoir valve, the boat went to the surface like a cork.

As she came up out of the water so quickly, the sun was shining brightly and beautifully over the broad and clear expanse.

Frank once more headed the boat to the southeast, and lashed the wheel. The Diver sped on like a bird.

Not a sail was visible on the horizon. Later that day Frank changed the course to the southward, and said:

"We should cross the equator by the end of the week. We will then, in a couple of days, sight the Island of St. Helena. From thence to the Cape to Good Hope it is a very clear and rapid sail."

This announcement was hailed with much pleasure and satisfaction by Sam Bagnall.

"After we have made the Cape of Good Hope," he said, "I shall feel as if we were pretty well on our way to the Yellow Sea."

"Something over half way!" said Frank.

"Well, that is something!"

"Ah, certainly!"

Barney was now once more busying himself in shining up brass work in the cabin.

Pomp was engaged in the galley getting up some of those delectable dishes which he knew so well how to invent.

Frank and Sam sat out on the deck, enjoying the balmy air.

It was some while since Barney had been able to play any practical joke on his colleague, for the fact, that Pomp had been wholly on his guard.

Several times the darky had ventured to put up a job on the Celt, but each time some circumstance had conspired to defeat him.

They were extremely fond of playing jokes on each other.

Of course Frank did not permit it, but he might as well have tried to turn the north wind into the south.

They would persist in their pranks in spite of all.

It was hard to say which generally got the best of the argument.

As a whole it was a pretty even matter. But on this occasion Barney grinned and muttered to himself:

"I belave I'll give that naygur a pretty good dose this toime. Shure, I'll pizen him!"

So he scraped away at the brass railings and chuckled to himself the while.

He finished his task and then stuck his head above the companionway.

It was easy to see that the coast was clear. Frank Reade, Jr., and Sam were well engaged.

The Celt went back down into the cabin and tip-toed to a position from whence he had a good view of the galley.

There was Pomp industriously at work. The darky suspected nothing.

The Celt chuckled.

"Begorra, I'll spile his fun!" he muttered.

Pomp was singing merrily:

"Down in ole Kyarline,
Dis darky's gwine to go,
Back to de ole plantation,
Once moh—"

Bang—clatter—clash! Pomp had dropped his skillet, drowning the last stanza.

"Bress mah soul, dat am a berry bad sign," he sputtered, "de las' time I dropped mah skillet, I done heard dat mah uncle in Kyarline who's gwine fo' to leave me all his fortune, had done got kicked by a mewl, but didn't die. Mebbe I hear now he hab died an' lef' his money to some good fo' nuffin' nigger, an' I gets left. Jes' mah luck."

Barney grinned and rubbed his sides.

"Begorra, ye'll thinks it's bad luck yez are havin'," he muttered. "I'll foix ye, yez black son av a gun."

The Celt crept up the back stairs over the galley.

Here the chimney arose just above a jog in the deck. It was protected by a patent flange, so that even when under the water, the smoke could be forced out.

Barney understood the mechanism of this well.

By pulling out a little pin the flange would drop, and there—well we shall see.

Barney pulled out the pin. Pomp was just in the act of bending over the fire pot, as Barney saw by looking down through a tiny aperture.

It was the moment for action.

Barney drew the pin. Instantly the pneumatic draught was reversed.

Down the chimney came a fearful gust of smoke and soot, and took Pomp full in the face.

Mouth, nose, ears and hair, were filled with the fearful black soot.

The darky was fairly knocked over with the force of the thing. It was a terrific dose.

Spluttering and gasping, he regained his feet.

But it was some moments before he could see anything.

Then, after digging the soot out of his eyes, he saw himself in a glass near.

Mercy on us! he was a sight indeed.

Of course the black did not show on his ebony skin, but his white apron and nifty colored shirt were a sight to behold.

Moreover, his whole row of delicious pies upon the table near were literally buried in soot.

For a moment the darky gazed aghast upon this catastrophe.

Of course he never once dreamed of the true cause of it.

He had no idea that the mischievous Celt above had slipped the pin back in its place and was now rolling over, convulsed with laughter.

"Begorra, I've turned the tables on the naygur this toime!" he muttered, in great glee. "He'll niver git aven wid me fer that."

CHAPTER VI.

THE HURRICANE.

INDEED this would seem a difficult thing for Pomp to do.

"Mah goodness!" gasped the dismayed darky; "wha' ebber did git into dat ar stove? I nebbber see it do dat afo'."

Once more he approached the stove cautiously.

It was drawing as nicely as ever, and the fire was glowing finely. Evidently it had again resumed its normal condition.

Pomp scratched some of the soot out of his wool.

Then he doffed his apron, and shook as much of the black stuff off him as he could.

"Dat am berry funny," he muttered. "If yo' was a man, sah, I'd gib yo' a bit ob a beatin'. Might a-knowed I'd hab suffin' happen to me, droppin' dat ole skillet. Mah goodness, lan' ob massy, jes' luk at dem pies!"

Pomp could have wept as he saw the products of his culinary skill so utterly annihilated.

He stood staring at them a moment, and then Africa's blood began to boil.

"Darn dat ole nasty stove!" he yelled, "take dat yo' dirty fing, an' dat, an' dat!"

Losing his temper in characteristic fashion, Pomp began to kick the stove with all his might.

The result was more injurious to the darky than to the stove.

His foot slipped and his shin came violently in contact with the iron frame.

The result was a yell of agony from the darky, who doubled himself up and twisted frantically around the room.

"Law sakes, I'se done kill mahsef, an' all fo' dat nasty stove!" he howled.

As soon as the pain subsided an idea happened to strike the darky.

"Mebbe dar am suffin' de mattah wif dat patent funnel!" he muttered. "I jes' go up an' see!"

And up the stairs he rushed. But before he reached the funnel, Barney had slid down into the cabin by the main stairs.

The Celt quickly passed through the cabin into the galley where Pomp had been. He could see better the effect of his practical joke here, and convulsed with laughter, he retreated into the main cabin before Pomp came down.

But unwittingly he betrayed himself.

Stepping into a huge pile of the soot in the middle of the floor, he had left his footprints there as natural as life.

Now there was a great difference in the shape of Barney's and Pomp's feet.

The darky's were much longer and larger.

As soon as Pomp came down from the deck he at once saw the tell-tale footprints.

A great change came over the darky's face. He scratched his woolly head.

"On mah wo'd," he muttered, "I done jus' know wha' to fink ob dat. Dey look berry much lak de feet ob dat I'ishman!"

Pomp went to the lavatory and proceeded to wash himself.

He donned a clean shirt and apron.

Then with blood in his eye he went into the cabin.

Barney was busy scouring some brass work. The Celt was as sober as a clock.

"Say, Mistah I'ish," said Pomp, excitedly, "youse tink youse berry smarht, don' yo'? But yo' amn't so smarht as yo' jes' fink yo' am!"

"Bejabers, wan wudn't nade to be conshumed wid smartness to match yez," retorted Barney.

"Huh, yo' fink yo' play yo' nasty tricks on me, an' don' git found out, eh?"

"Phwat's that yez say? Yez are off yer base, naygur! What ividence have yez got that I've iver played any nasty trick on yez?"

"Yo' hab been in mah kitchen an' done covered eberyfing ober wif soot!"

"Phwat?" roared Barney. "Don't yez dare say I've been in yure kitchen!"

"Yar, don' yo' say yo' habn't? Dar am de smut on yo' feet, an' yo' footprints am on de kitchen floor."

Barney gave a startled glance at his feet.

In a moment he saw he was betrayed. The tell-tale expression on his face removed the last ray of doubt in Pomp's mind.

Seeing that the joke was out Barney was unable to restrain his laughter.

He fairly roared with merriment, which outburst of course only enraged Pomp.

"Begorra, I'm square wid yez fer ould times!" roared the Celt. "That's the toime I turned the tables on yez bedad!"

This was as far as the Celt got in his exultation. The next moment he was at his victim's mercy.

Pomp lowered his head and came at Barney.

The onslaught was so sudden, that the Celt had no time to prepare for it.

The darky's head took him full in the stomach and he went over like a ten-pin.

He saw stars for a moment and the breath was knocked out of him. The darky was upon him instantly, and would have pummeled him well, but at this moment an authoritative voice came down the stairs.

"Barney and Pomp, on deck!"

It was Frank calling them.

Instantly forgotten was all else in the call to duty. They went flying up the cabin stairs.

On deck Frank and Sam had suddenly noted a strange yellow cloud rising into the zenith from the southwest.

They well knew what it meant.

"Mercy on us, Frank," cried Sam, "that looks like a hurricane!"

"That's just what it is," agreed the young inventor, in alarm, "and a hurricane in these regions means something!"

"What shall we do?"

"I'll provide for that."

As soon as Barney and Pomp came on deck they at once saw and comprehended the peril.

"Massy Lordy, Marse Frank!" cried Pomp, in alarm, "wha'ebber we gwine to do?"

"Begorra, that sthorm wud break the Diver all to pieces!" cried Barney.

"We'll see about that," said Frank; "clear the deck!"

Everything portable on the deck was taken into the cabin. Frank held a patent barometer in his hand.

With it he could measure the advance of the storm. It was certainly marching rapidly along.

Higher into the zeinth rolled the yellow cloud. Now there came a puff of wind. A distant line of surging white foam was seen.

"It is coming right along!" cried Bagnall.

"Yes!" agreed Frank, "it will be here in ten minutes."

"What shall we do?"

"Keep cool!"

Frank knew that they had nothing to fear from the oncoming storm. It would be easy enough for the Diver to descend beyond all chance of harm.

But if any luckless sailing craft were upon the deep, and should come in the path of the storm, they would get rough usage.

However, not a sail was in sight on the horizon.

There was, therefore, no chance for the submarine boat to render aid to any such luckless craft.

The approach of the storm was certainly a most grand spectacle.

It was watched with deep interest until it was evident that it was too risky to linger longer.

Then Frank said:

"Sink her Barney!"

All rushed into the cabin.

Barney pressed the valve which hermetically sealed the doors and windows. Then he opened the reservoir.

Down sank the Diver.

They were not a moment too soon, for the hurricane burst above them with terrible fury.

The Diver did not descend entirely to the bottom of the sea.

She forged ahead some fifty fathoms under the surface. At this depth the rough action of the waves was but slightly felt.

For fully half an hour Frank held the barometer in his hand, and then he said:

"The storm is over, Barney. Let her go up."

The order was obeyed, and the next moment the submarine boat leaped out into the air again.

The sun was shining brightly over the tossing sea.

To the westward could be seen the bank of receding storm clouds.

The storm had been a violent one as could be seen.

When the submarine boat had gone down, there was no sign of a sail upon the horizon.

But now as the submarine voyagers emerged on deck, Sam Bagnall cried:

"Look! mercy on us, there is a dismantled ship!"

This was true.

Driven before the gale a noble ship had been stripped of masts and rigging, and floated a sinking wreck upon the sea.

She was distant not half a mile and at once Frank cried:

"Bear down for her, Barney. We must give her aid."

The Celt obeyed.

The submarine boat speedily bore down upon the wreck. As she came within hail, the forms of two men were seen at the rail.

They were waving their arms excitedly to attract attention.

Approaching within fifty yards, Frank hailed them.

"Ahoy the ship!"

"Ahoy!" came back.

"What ship is that?"

"The Pearl, coast trader from Philadelphia, U. S. A."

"What is your trouble?"

"We are cut down by the storm. Nine of our crew were swept overboard. I am the mate, Nelson Peters, and this is the cook, Francis Jones. We are the only survivors."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Sam. "Is not that terrible?"

"All swept overboard but two," said Frank.

"No doubt they are willing to be taken off?"

"Oh, certainly."

Then Frank hailed them again.

"Do you want to come off?"

"We must or go to the bottom," was the reply, "for this ship is sinking fast."

It was a thrilling moment.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE YELLOW SEA.

It would have been most inhuman to have gone on and left these two unfortunate men to perish on the sinking wreck.

Frank had no intention of doing this, however.

It could be seen that there was not much time left for the two survivors to leave the wreck.

They must come aboard at once or go down.

The wreck was settling fast. The rescue had come just in the nick of time.

Frank went into the pilot house.

He quickly swung the Diver close alongside the sinking vessel. Then Barney shouted:

"Jump!"

Down leaped the two seamen. Frank gave the Diver headway and the wreck was left behind.

Before the submarine boat had gone far, the wreck went down.

Nelson Peters, the mate of the Pearl, was an intelligent man, and graphically described their experiences.

"We left St. Paul de Loanda four weeks ago!" he said. "We stopped at Ascension and were making good speed when the storm broke. It used us up badly. Our rudder chain broke and then we were at its mercy!"

"Well," said Frank, warmly. "You are welcome aboard the Diver!"

"The Diver?" exclaimed Nelson. "Ah, I see, this is a Government craft. A torpedo boat."

"Not so!" replied Frank. "This is the submarine boat, the Diver."

"Submarine boat?" gasped Peters.

"Yes!"

"You don't mean to say that you travel under the sea with this craft?"

"Just so!"

"Wall, I'll be keel hauled!" spouted the mate. "I've heard lots of theories about traveling under water, but I've never seen them executed yet."

"Well, you see it now!"

With this Frank showed Peters all over the boat.

The mate acted as if he was in a dream.

"And where were you during the storm?" he asked.

"We were under the surface," replied Frank.

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do!"

"And you didn't feel the storm at all down there?"

"Not in the least."

"Well, this beats all the wonders I've ever heard of! I'm beat!"

"Now the best we can do with you," said Frank, "is to drop you at St. Helena."

"That will do."

"You can get passage to some home port from there."

"Certainly."

Two days later, after fast sailing, one day Barney sighted St. Helena.

The little island where the famous Napoleon was so long exiled was approached not without some curious feelings.

The little harbor of Jamestown was entered and the Diver anchored.

A message was sent to the commandant, who replied in welcome terms. Then Frank and Sam went ashore with the two rescued men.

Leave was taken of Peters and Jones here. They speedily secured passage home.

Frank and Sam visited Longwood and Napoleon's tomb and then returned to the Diver.

Once more the little submarine boat was under way, bound for the Cape of Good Hope.

For days the southward course was held. Then Frank stood in for the Cape, which was the southern extremity of the African continent.

One day Capetown was sighted.

A brief stop was made here. But none in the harbor suspected the character of the Diver and might have thought her simply a gentleman's yacht.

After procuring a few provisions here Frank started the Diver for the Channel of Mozambique.

In due time this was reached and the northward course begun inside the isle of Madagascar.

Days passed and still the staunch little Diver held to the northward.

Rounding Cape Ambro, the course was then directly across the Indian Ocean.

Day after day the little craft forged on its way.

In due course the great distance was covered, and one fine morning the Isle of Barneo was sighted.

Through the China Sea the sail was one of deep interest to all.

The curious craft encountered the glimpses of Celestial life, and all was extremely interesting.

The Isle of Formosa was passed, and then one day the Diver, after a long trip, at last entered the waters of the Yellow Sea.

Sam Bagnall was intensely excited.

"At last!" he cried. "Now we shall find the cave of pearls."

The Chinese Empire now lay upon one side of them, and the Peninsula of Corea upon the other.

The Yellow Sea was traversed by thousands of Chinese and Japanese craft.

There were pearl hunters, fishermen of all kinds, sponge divers and countless other species of craft.

As soon as they were well into the Yellow Sea, Frank said:

"Now, we shall probably be under water for some time. We will not come to the surface until we have found the Cave of Pearls."

"Good!" cried Sam. "You will find the bed of the Yellow Sea most interesting."

"I have no doubt."

So the Diver was sent to the bottom.

The famous Yellow Sea is not greatly noted for its depth. The Diver went down in two hundred feet of water.

It came upon a sandy plain, fairly studded with heaps of the rarest and most beautiful of shells.

The water even was unlike the water in the Atlantic.

It had a soft yellowish hue, from which, no doubt, it gained its name. Hosts of fish of all colors swarmed in its depths.

The marine plants were of the most rare and beautiful kind, and the submarine voyagers gazed upon them in sheer wonderment.

"By jove," exclaimed Frank, "this is the fairy land of the submarine world. It is enchanting!"

"Is it not?" cried Sam, enthusiastically. "I call it grand!"

"Yes, it truly is!"

However, the object of the submarine expedition was to discover the Cave of Pearls. So the Diver was sent slowly forward through the water.

No haste was made as all were anxious to study the peculiarities of the ocean depths here.

For some hours the boat kept on thus.

The search-light made all as plain as day for a great distance ahead. Many strange spectacles were revealed in its glare.

Suddenly the whole region seemed to undergo a change.

The sandy plain seemed to end and now the Diver sailed over mighty coral forests of vari-colored coral.

A most beautiful sight it was.

All sorts of fantastic forms the coral insects had given their works. There were images of men of giants, of birds and beasts. Once the coral formation took the shape of a huge palace.

This structure was mighty in its proportions, and so real did it seem that all in the party were inclined almost to believe it the work of human hands.

"You would truly think that human beings had built that," cried Sam. "Would you not?"

"Begorra, that's true!" declared Barney. "It looks very much like the old family castle av the O'Sheas, me ancestors, an' they were related to Brian Baru."

Everybody smiled at this, but Barney did not observe it; so he was left to his fancy that all believed this tremendous exaggeration.

On over these wonderful sights the boat sailed.

Hours slipped by thus.

The voyagers were never tired of sitting by the observation windows and studying the scene below.

It was certainly grand beyond all description.

After awhile Sam cried:

"Now we shall come to the pearl banks. We shall soon be looking for the cave of pearls."

Of course all were endowed with fresh interest.

Now the coral formation began to cease and once again the clear, white sand began to show.

Suddenly Barney cried:

"Bejabers, phwhat the devil is that?"

Down past the observation window came a naked form. Down it went and grasped a tuft of marine grass.

It was seen to be a type of Japanese pearl diver. He was completely naked.

One instant he gave a startled look at the diver.

It was safe to say that no invader of the ocean depths ever experienced a more genuine fright than this astonished diver.

He waited not for why nor wherefore.

The strange monster of the depths was inexplicable to him and up he went like a flash.

Everybody laughed.

"I'll warrant he's a frightened Jap," cried Sam.

"He'll tell his companions above a fearful yarn," agreed Frank.

"They will probably never come here again looking for pearls."

"You are right," laughed Sam. "Oh, we shall run across lots of those fellows."

The Diver kept on more slowly now.

Finally Frank stopped it altogether.

"Bring out the diving suits, Barney?" he commanded.

"What, now?" asked Sam.

"I think I will indulge in a little pearl hunting myself."

"Good! May I go with you?"

"Certainly. There can go three in our party; Barney will remain aboard."

The diving-suits now brought out were of a different pattern from the others.

They carried no life lines, but each diver carried a chemical generator and a reservoir upon his back.

This enabled the submarine explorer to act more independently, and this was a great advantage.

The diving-suits were quickly donned, and then all prepared to leave the boat.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEARCHING FOR PEARLS.

It was not long before the three submarine explorers were ready to enter the vestibule.

This was quickly filled with water and then they emerged and stood upon the deck.

It was a very much greater advantage to be rid of the lifelines.

The new diving suits seemed a big success.

Frank led the way down the rope ladder. As there were no lifelines the Diver now was able to rest safely upon the bed of the ocean.

Sam Bagnall was right in his element.

The dream of his life to explore the depths of the Yellow Sea was finding a realization.

He was delighted.

All now began to search for the pearls.

Generally these are found in the shell of a peculiar species of oyster.

But in the Yellow Sea they were to be found broadcast, where they had been deposited ages before by the probable decomposition of the shells.

The beautiful jewels were easily distinguishable from the pretty pebbles which abounded everywhere.

Within a very few moments Frank had put his hand upon a beauty, which was certainly worth several hundred dollars.

Then Pomp found one.

The darky was delighted. He held it up for the others to see.

But though the vicinity was thoroughly searched, not another was found.

It was more than likely that the locality had been well explored by the pearl divers.

During the search they had wandered some distance from the Diver.

There was no danger in remaining under the water, so long as the chemical generators worked all right.

If they should give out, of course suffocation would ensue.

But there was no danger of their giving out, unless some injury was done them. This, of course, was a possible thing.

Thus far nothing had been seen of any dangerous species of fish.

There was what the Japs call the "man fish," a species of giant shark, but no specimen had been encountered.

As it was, Frank had equipped himself with one of his deep-water needle guns. Therefore he feared nothing.

But he was destined to have a chance to use it before the return was made.

Pomp was the one to stir up the hidden peril.

The darky received such a scare as he did not soon get over.

He was exploring in the sands when he came upon a long ridge

which rose perhaps a foot high and extended into the depths of some marine growth.

This ridge seemed like a ridge of sand laid up nicely by the action of opposing currents.

The darky never dreamed that there was anything under it.

Suddenly and just as Pomp was about to put his hand upon it, it began to move.

"Golly!" gasped the darky, with bulging eyes back of his helmet glass. "Wha' de debbil am dat?"

The ridge of sand was motionless again. The darky viewed curiously.

"I jes' wondah if dar am anyfing undah dat heap ob sand!" he muttered. "If dere is, den wha' de debbil kin it be?"

Curiosity was an overmastering component part of Pomp's nature.

The more he reflected the deeper became his purpose to know what was under that ridge of sand.

So he drew a keen knife and quickly thrust the point down into the sand.

The result was startling.

Instantly the sand was dispelled. Up rose a huge green fold, a long, gigantic, sinewy, snake-like form.

It rose high above Pomp's head, and the darky recoiled in terror.

"Golly!" gasped Pomp. "I done fink dat am the sea-serpent, Marse Frank! help! help!"

Of course Frank could not hear his cries.

But the commotion in the water made waves which struck his helmet and drew his attention.

Turning in surprise, he saw the mighty serpent-like form contorting itself about Pomp.

The darky was caught in one of the folds and Frank saw a mighty pair of jaws over the luckless fellow.

For one brief instant it seemed to the young inventor, as if the sea-serpent had indeed proved itself a reality.

Then he saw by the huge fins and the crested back that this was only a mighty specimen of deep sea eel.

"My God!" gasped the young inventor. "What a monster he is. I fear Pomp is doomed!"

But Frank was not the one to stand by and see his faithful follower die.

He would make at least one effort to save his life.

So quick as a flash, he drew aim with the needle gun.

It was the first time he had ever tried the weapon upon large game in the deep sea.

To say that it was a success would be a mild statement.

The needle struck the eel full in the lower jaw. The explosion fairly tore it into shreds.

The monster was contorted even more fearfully than before. But Frank was not satisfied.

He quickly threw another needle into the gun. Again he drew aim and pressed the lever.

Again the needle went straight to the mark. It struck the eel this time in the neck and its entire head was blown off.

Pomp was hurled yards away by the contortions of the huge body of the eel.

But his life was saved.

He picked himself up unhurt. In a few moments the death struggle was over.

The body of the eel lay passive upon the bed of the ocean.

Then Frank and Sam rushed forward. They put their helmets together and Sam shouted:

"You were just in the nick of time, Frank."

"Yes."

"Isn't he a monster! He looks like a snake."

"Let us measure him."

This was done.

To the amazement of all, the big eel was found to be full fifty feet in length.

He was a monster!

"Such creatures belong to an antediluvian period," declared Frank. "I doubt if that eel was ever seen by human eyes before."

He may be thousands of years old for all we know."

"Perhaps he is the monster called the sea serpent by so many people," said Sam.

"No," replied Frank; "he is not that individual. These species of eel live on the bottom; they never go the surface."

"Do you believe it?"

"I know it."

The discussion ended here. But Pomp had made a resolution.

This was to stick his knife blade into no more ridges of sand.

But for Frank's opportune shot with the needle gun he would have lost his life.

There was no doubt of this.

They had now wandered from the submarine boat fully a quarter of a mile.

It could be located easily enough by means of the glare of the search light. But Frank was decided that it was best to return.

So he made signs to the others to this effect.

At once his request was complied with. All three divers set out upon the return to the Diver.

As they came along they had come by a high mound of sand. No particular attention had been given to it.

All had adjudged it simply an elevation made by Nature in the smooth and sandy plain.

Nothing more.

But now as they viewed it from a different quarter a peculiar thing was noticed.

All three came to a halt.

Frank put his helmet to Sam's and shouted

"What do you think of it?"

"It looks like an old-fashioned ship."

"So it does!"

The sand pile certainly had the outlines of a ship, something after the pattern of a Chinese junk. It had this appearance, beyond doubt.

But was it such?

This remained to be seen.

Frank approached the heap of sand, and began to kick some of it aside with his foot.

He boldly began to climb it.

But he had not taken many steps, when suddenly and without a second's warning he went crashing downward out of sight.

For a moment Sam and Pomp stood horror-stricken.

His sudden disappearance filled them with a deadly fear. They hardly knew what to do.

"Golly!" gasped Pomp. "Marse Frank am done fo'. Nebber say dat. He mus' jes' be sabed!"

With this idea in view, the plucky ducky rushed up to the spot where Frank had been.

But alas! the moment his feet touched the treacherous sands, he also went out of sight in a twinkling.

Sam Bagnall, the survivor, stood spellbound and horror-struck. What should he do?

For a few moments he was utterly unable to act.

Then desperately he started forward, determined to rescue them or at least to die with them.

He paused cautiously, however, when near the verge of the opening in the sands.

Where did it lead to? For aught he knew to the center of the earth.

Forgetting himself, he shouted:

"Hello, Frank! Where are you?"

Of course, no answer came back. Bagnall was irresolute for a moment.

Then he started forward and nearer to the verge of the hole in the sands. A fearful thrill came over him, as he also felt the sands giving way, and then down he went, all in an instant and ere he could save himself.

CHAPTER IX.

A BATTLE WITH THE SHARKS.

In a like manner to Frank and Pomp, Sam went down into the yielding sands.

He made a spasmodic effort to save himself.

But it was in vain.

Down he went, and had it been in the open air the distance would have given him an ugly fall.

But falling through the water is ever a more gradual matter. He alighted upon his feet and stood face to face with Frank and Pomp.

The electric lamps on their helmets showed them where they were. This was in the hold of a rotting vessel of the Chinese pattern. The ancient timbers were all about them.

They had fallen through the rotten deck. Several tons of sand had rolled down after them, and made a pile nearly on a level with the aperture above.

It required a moment for Sam Bagnall to recover himself.

Then he put his helmet close to Frank's and shouted:

"Where the devil are we anyway?"

"It looks to me as if we had fallen into the hold of a sunken vessel," replied Frank.

"It does?"

"Yes."

"I guess you're right. But will we ever get out again?"

"Oh yes."

"How?"

"I will show you later."

Frank seemed confident so Sam was satisfied. Reassuring words were spoken to Pomp.

Then Frank shouted:

"Let's explore the hulk."

"All right."

The young inventor led the way over the rotten timbers. There were cracks and apertures leading into the lower hold.

But they managed to keep clear of these.

From one part of the wreck to another they went. Little of interest however was seen.

So ancient was the wreck that its fittings had long since rusted and passed away. If there had been any treasure of gold or silver aboard, no vestige of it was left now.

After a thorough search of the hulk had been made, the question of reaching the upper level was considered.

But Frank speedily solved the difficulty.

Finding the spot where they had fallen into the place, he climbed the mound of sand, and reaching the upper edge of timber, swung himself up.

Pomp and Sam followed him. They were safe and sound once more.

But they had had enough experience for the time being, and decided to return to the Diver.

Frank had a feeling that the chemicals in his generator were giving out, and this hastened his step.

The Diver was yet quite a little ways off.

Suddenly as they were tramping along Sam clutched Frank's arm and made startled gestures.

But the young inventor had seen the same peril to which Sam now called his attention.

A tremendous number of huge and savage looking fish were circling in the water above them.

These fish Frank saw at a glance were the terrible manfish of the Japs, or sharks.

Any one of them could swallow a man, so great was their capacity.

That they were preparing for an attack was most certain.

Frank made hasty signs to the others. All started on the run for the Diver.

To attempt to run under water is a curious feat. It is something like treading in a load of straw.

But the three divers made most marvelous progress.

They made the deck of the Diver just as one of the monsters made a dive for them.

The shark narrowly missed Pomp, but they were in the vestibule now.

Closing the door, the water was quickly forced out.

Into the cabin they sprang, and were welcomed joyfully by Barney.

"Begorra, I was afraid yez wud niver return aloive," he declared. "I'm mighty glad to see yez!"

"It was a close call!" cried Sam; "but look, Frank!"

Bagnall pointed out of the observation windows. The sight beyond them was a thrilling one.

The water was alive with the deadly Yellow Sea sharks. They were circling about the submarine boat as if they intended to attack it.

"I'll fix them!" cried Frank.

He sprang into the forward gun room. Thus far he had had no occasion to use the heavy needle gun.

But now he was decided to make use of it.

The sharks greatly threatened the safety of the boat. It was necessary to resort to extreme measures.

So Frank loaded the gun and thrust its muzzle through the rubber porthole, which was so flexible that it closed tightly about the gun barrel and prevented the water from coming in.

He took aim into the school of sharks and pressed the electric button.

There was a shock and a slight recoil. Then the water seemed churned into white foam all about the boat.

It was the explosion of the dynamite which caused this.

The terrific concussion killed dozens of the sharks, and their bodies went to the surface.

The surviving fish greatly frightened darted away. That one shot was enough. They would not return.

"Good enough!" cried Sam Bagnall, excitedly. "I tell you, Frank, we don't need to fear anything under nor above the sea!"

"You are right!" agreed Frank, "but shall we remain here any longer?"

"I see nothing to be gained by it!" agreed Sam.

So Barney pressed the motor lever and sent the boat ahead.

For the next few days no thrilling incident worthy of note during the submarine search occurred.

The Diver kept on its way through the various depths of the Yellow Sea.

At length Sam one day declared:

"I think we are not far from the Atoll of Che Li. If so we are quite near the locality where the Cave of Pearls should be found."

"If such a thing exists!" said Frank.

"I have no reason to doubt it," declared Sam.

"That may be true. Yet these Chinese divers have strange fancies, you know."

"Well," said Sam, with earnest conviction, "I have absolute faith in the existence of the Cave of Pearls and feel sure that we shall find it."

"At any rate," said Frank, "whether we do or not, matters little. We have had a jolly trip and many exciting adventures. It was worth the trip here to see the wonders of the Yellow Sea!"

"I am glad you are satisfied!" said Sam, with a breath of relief, but I am sure that we shall yet accomplish the object of our mission."

"So far as I am concerned it matters little whether we do or not," said Frank. "The pearls we would recover I should have little or no use for. The adventures we have experienced and the information we have gained has been of far more value to me."

The submarine boat was gliding along at a good pace through the deep sea.

The bed of the ocean had assumed that sandy appearance of the region where pearls are generally found.

Sam Bagnall went into the pilot-house with Barney and kept a sharp lookout, for he believed that they were not far from the object of their search.

Suddenly they came to numerous ropes, descending through the water and attached to weights which laid upon the bottom.

Sam recognized the nature of these at once.

"They are used by the divers," he said "to pull themselves down

into deeper water. The divers who come down to these depths greatly endanger their lives."

Even as Sam made this announcement the divers were seen coming down the ropes in all directions.

They would grope around in the sands for a few seconds, pick up a handful of pebbles, and then fly to the surface.

It was an interesting sight, and the submarine explorers watched it with deep interest.

Whenever the native divers caught sight of the submarine boat they seemed terrified, and went to the surface almost instantly.

This caused all on board to laugh.

"They evidently don't want any part of us!" said Sam. "Well, I don't think we want any part of them!"

"So long as they do not disturb us, we have no reason to disturb them," said Frank.

"They will not trouble us!"

The Diver now sailed away into depths which it was evident the divers could not penetrate.

Here it was seen that pearls might be found in plenty, but the Diver did not stop.

Sam Bagnall was looking for bigger game. Suddenly he gave a great start.

"Here we are!" he shouted, triumphantly; "there is the coral cave, and we have reached the end of our journey."

The most intense of excitement was created by this announcement.

Then all on board the diver saw dead ahead what looked like a huge yawning mouth of white coral.

It seemed to have risen right up out of the sands and so high was the arch that the Diver could easily sail right into it.

The Cave of pearls was found at last! Sam Bagnall was beside himself with joy and exultation.

"I knew we'd find it!" he cried. "Hurrah! Now for the pearls! There is a fortune for us in that cave!"

"Beggorra it seems aisy enough to foind fortunes under the seal!" cried Barney. "Some av the poor divils on land ought to have this chance!"

"Right you are, Barney!" cried Frank; "but they have no submarine boat, you see."

"If they had there would be no fortunes to hunt for," declared Sam. "So it would make little difference after all. But what shall we do, Frank? Are we to sail into the cave?"

CHAPTER X.

IN THE CAVE OF PEARLS.

"No!" replied the young inventor, quickly, "that will not do yet! Let her go down, Barney, and put out the anchors!"

The Celt obeyed.

The submarine boat came to a stop right in the mouth of the coral cave.

An immense number of gayly-colored fish were frightened out. Then the water became quite calm, and the scene was one beautiful beyond all ordinary power of conception.

The submarine voyagers gazed upon it with interest.

The coral cave was divided into various galleries and passages, which seemed to lead down into the center of the earth.

These were supported by arches and pillars, as clean cut as if fashioned by man.

Truly it was one of the greatest wonders of the Yellow Sea yet revealed to their gaze.

Things were made ship-shape aboard the Diver, then the diving suits were brought forth.

Frank, Barney and Sam were to go forth on a tour of exploration. Pomp was to take his turn aboard.

The Celt was delighted with his chance to accompany his master. Nothing suited him any better.

In a short while they were ready.

The glare of the search-light was sent as far as possible into the depths of the cavern.

Then the trio left the boat.

Once more they were upon the ocean floor. This time they carried besides axes, knives and bags for the pearls, each one of the needle guns.

There was no telling what marine monster they might encounter in the coral cave.

In a few moments they were well into the cave.

The search-light shone far into the place, but soon they were obliged to depend upon their helmet lamps after turning several corners.

The further they penetrated into the cavern, the more remarkable were the wonders they viewed.

But thus far the tradition that this was a Cave of Pearls had hardly found verification.

Not a sign of a pearl had been seen. Groping in the sands, handful after handful of pebbles were examined, but no pearls appeared.

"That's mighty curious!" muttered Sam, who was not at all satisfied. "There must be pearls here!"

But suddenly they came out into a high arched and domed cavern chamber. The scene upon which they gazed was one of great splendor.

White and crystal-like the coral formation glistened in the light of the electric lamps.

Truly it was a sight such as is rarely accorded human gaze.

The submarine voyagers gazed upon it for a time with deep interest. Then Frank reached down and picked up a pebble at his feet.

It was a pearl.

A larger or more beautiful one the explorers had never seen. Sam Bagnall was overjoyed.

At once all began to search the sands. The fear that this was not a cave of pearls was at once dispelled.

Pearls of the largest and most costly kind were secured by the dozen. They were safely stowed away by the hunters.

The floor of the cavern seemed a literal storehouse for the gems.

It was easy enough to understand this. Beyond a doubt this had once been a retreat for the pearl oyster. The shells had decomposed long ago, leaving the pearls free to mingle with the pebbles.

For hours the submarine voyagers groped in the sands for the precious gems.

They had secured many of them, and there seemed yet many more to be recovered.

But Frank realized that they had been long away from the Diver and it was best to return as soon as possible.

So he arose and made signs to the others.

They at once responded—Bagnall was the most jubilant of any.

He put his helmet close to Frank's and shouted:

"Haven't we made a big haul?"

"Yes, we have!" admitted Frank, "but I think we have tarried here long enough!"

"I am ready to return."

"All right."

But just at this moment a strange rumbling was heard, the water seemed to make a whirlpool about them, and the floor of the cavern trembled.

The divers looked at each other in surprise.

"What was that?" shouted Sam.

"I don't know," replied Frank. "It seemed like an earthquake."

"An earthquake?"

"Yes."

"Then we are in deadly peril. Perhaps some part of the cavern has fallen in."

"My God! We would be buried!"

It was a ghastly thought, but Barney, who had been listening intently, said:

"Beggorra, it's no earthquake, or I'm a loiar. Shure, av' I aint mistaken, the naygur is in the thrubble."

"Pomp!" exclaimed Frank, with sudden inspiration.

"Yis, sor!"

"Upon my word, Barney, I fear you are right. He has fired the needle gun for some purpose or other."

"So I believe, sor!"

"We must return at once!"

With all haste they now set out for the entrance to the cavern. But before they had gone far, there came another shock, and again the floor of the cavern trembled.

There was no doubt about it.

Pomp was in trouble.

He was probably firing the needle gun as a signal. Frank knew the vital importance of responding at once.

So the explorers hastened forward with all speed.

It seemed an interminable ways to the mouth of the cavern.

And now as they came out of the labyrinth of passages, Frank was given a start.

Where was the glare of the search-light? It had vanished!

The young inventor stumbled on until the mouth of the cave was at last reached.

The open sea was before them.

But the Diver was gone!

The submarine boat had left its anchorage. Not a sign of it was visible anywhere.

What did it mean?

What had happened?

Had some terrible calamity befallen Pomp? Had the Diver been attacked by some submarine monster?

All these questions flashed through Frank's brain.

He could find no answer.

Sam put his helmet to his.

"The boat is gone!" he cried.

"Yes," replied Frank.

"What will we do?"

"God only knows!"

"If he does not return——"

"Then we are lost!"

Lost at the bottom of the Yellow Sea! Fully fifty miles from any land! Certainly the outlook was a terrible one!

So long as the chemical generators worked the divers could live under the sea.

But the chemicals could not be expected to last forever.

When they should give out then the end must come. Such a death was something frightful to contemplate.

But what could be done?

To attempt to walk to land in any direction seemed futile.

The atoll mentioned by Bagnall might not be over fifty miles distant.

But to attempt to walk fifty miles under the water was a fearful thing to contemplate.

In fact it would be impossible.

Frank knew this well.

There was certainly but one thing to do. This was to sit down in the vain hope that Pomp would return with the Diver.

If no harm had come to the boat it was likely that he would come back in due season.

But if the Diver had come to grief or was destroyed, then their fate seemed sealed.

They sat down upon ledges of coral for awhile, unable to form any plan of action.

"By Jove, Frank," exclaimed Sam, "our expedition has come to a bad end!"

"Indeed it seems so," agreed the young inventor.

He was trying to formulate some plan for getting out of the dilemma.

With his inventive genius it would seem strange if he did not succeed.

And sure enough an idea occurred to Frank.

He suddenly turned to Bagnall and asked:

"Didn't you say that this locality was frequented by divers?"

"Yes."

"But the water here is a little too deep, isn't it?"

"Yes, just a trifle."

Then Frank's idea became plain enough to Sam.

"Oh, I see what you are driving at. We can strike some of the divers and escape in that way."

"Exactly. If we knew where there was a boat and people on the surface to rescue us we could kick these lead weights off our feet and go up."

"That will at least save our lives."

"Certainly."

The spirits of the three divers at once revived. Death could certainly be averted in that fashion.

To find the native divers would not be at all difficult.

They peopled these waters, and one need not go far in any direction to encounter them.

But what of Pomp?

The fate of the darky and the submarine boat was a matter of no little solicitude to all.

But they still clung to the hope that he would return safely in course of time.

Hours passed. Darkness came and the long night dragged by.

It was dreary waiting for the divers, and they were more than anxious for morning to come.

If Pomp did not show up then, Frank was determined to make action.

Daylight came and once more the bed of the sea unfolded itself to them.

They were weary, restless and almost hopeless with the outlook.

CHAPTER XI.

POMP'S EXPERIENCE.

But what of Pomp?

The darky, left in charge of the Diver, while the pearl cave was being explored, had waited anxiously for them to return.

Time passed, and still the darky remained by the observation window, looking for their return.

"Golly," he exclaimed, "I done fink dey am makin' a good long stay. Shouldn't wonder if suffin had happened to 'em!"

The darky's patience was becoming exhausted, when it occurred to him that he ought to have something warm to eat prepared for Frank when he should return.

"I done fink I make some hot truffles an' tea," he declared. "Dat taste mos' good to Marse Frank."

So Pomp hastened away to the galley.

He soon had a good hot fire under way, and then was busy getting up a good repast.

It is needless to say that it would have been most welcome to the explorers, had they got back in time to have obtained it.

But they did not.

Pomp was greasing the irons for cooking the truffles, when suddenly he was hurled clear out of the galley.

Something had struck the boat like a thousand of bricks.

The shock had thrown the darky off his pins.

"Golly fo' glory!" he gasped. "Wha' de debbil do dat? I done fink I got mah leg broke!"

Then recovering himself as quickly as possible, he rushed into the cabin.

A glance out of the observation window made his woolly hair stand on end.

"Massy Lordy, de debbil hab got dis chile!" he howled—"fo' suah he hab got me!"

Indeed, it was a devilish face which looked in through the window.

The terrible catlike eyes of yellow and green, and the prodigious beak which worked with a vicious snap as if it wanted Pomp as a choice morsel.

Mighty, straggling arms were coiled about the Diver, and it was being dragged with fearful strength over the sandy bottom of the sea. The octopus, for such it was, was of mountainous size. Indeed, the submarine boat seemed but a toy in its grasp.

Over the bed of the ocean the creature dragged the boat as if it weighed not a feather.

And Pomp was powerless.

For a few moments the darky was unable to arrive at any clear idea of action.

Then he cried:

"Oh, Massy Lordy! I done wish Marse Frank was here now. Wha' shall I do? De debbil hab got us!"

Then Pomp bethought himself of the needle gun.

He could not train it upon the octopus, but he could fire it as a signal for Frank to return.

Perhaps the young inventor would know what to do. Pomp had faith that he would.

So the darky rushed to the gun.

He fired it twice, these shots being heard as we know by the divers. But the octopus still continued to drag the boat away over the sands.

In vain Pomp tried to think of some way to free himself of the monster.

There seemed no way.

He dared not put on a diving suit and venture out to attack the creature, for fear of the deadly tentacles.

There seemed no other way to give him battle. The situation was every moment becoming more desperate.

Then it occurred to Pomp to exhaust the reservoir, and send the boat to the surface.

Perhaps the octopus would then relax his hold.

So the darky rushed into the pilot-house, and pulled open the reservoir valve.

Instantly the boat began to slowly rise. The weight of the octopus was hardly sufficient to keep it down.

Up towards the surface went the boat in the grip of the huge spider-like creature.

Above the surface the Diver rose. The huge body of the octopus floated on the waves.

A score of sampans occupied by native divers were near. They hurriedly got out of the way.

They did not venture to attack the octopus.

Their fear of the monster was a most deadly one. They got out of the way quickly enough.

Pomp was in despair.

He thought of his friends back down there in the ocean depths, and his soul thrilled with fear for them.

Would they perish before he could return to aid them?

He was desperate, but as helpless as a babe. Meanwhile the octopus rather enjoyed being on the surface.

He was able to swim and drag the boat whither he pleased. This he proceeded to do.

His huge beak proceeded to demolish the rail and the ornaments of the roof of the pilot house.

But he could not penetrate the steel shell of the boat.

So that Pomp's life was not for a time threatened. Still the octopus hung onto its prey.

Hours passed, and the strange spectacle drifted on and on over the billows of the sea.

Finally darkness shut down over the ocean.

Through all the long hours of the night still the boat remained in the embrace of the octopus.

Pomp was getting mad.

"You fool fish yo!" he raved, shaking his fist at the octopus, "I done hab a mind fo' to break dat glass an' gib yo' a charge ob dynamite!"

But this would, of course, be out of the question.

The octopus was wholly the master of the situation.

Pomp flashed the search-light in its eyes.

This was the only thing which seemed to have any effect upon the creature.

It winced and at times seemed likely to relax its grip.

But daylight came before it did so.

Pomp was upon the very verge of despair, when the octopus, tiring of its embrace, slid away beneath the waves.

With a cry of joy Pomp sprang into the engine room.

Quick as a flash he swung the head of the boat about and put on all speed.

It was his impulse to get as far away from the spot as possible in as little time.

The Diver fairly sped through the waves, and soon had left the spot where the octopus disappeared miles behind.

But the darky knew full well that the end of the adventure was not yet.

It was now necessary, and without a moment's waste of time, to find his companions.

For aught he knew they might ere this be dead. All would depend upon the duration of the chemicals in the generators.

Pomp let the boat fly.

He knew not what direction to take, but he was resolved to make instant search.

Chance favored him.

After traveling what he believed to be the necessary distance to reach the vicinity of the Cave of Pearls, he let the boat go down.

Fortune was on his side.

The exhausted divers had about given up all hope, when a flood of light burst upon them.

Then down through the water the hull of the Diver was seen to descend. Down it settled.

Fortune had favored Pomp to strike the exact spot.

Frank had been just about to look for some friendly pearl divers when the light appeared.

To express the relief and joy of the submarine travelers in words would be impossible.

They rushed eagerly aboard the Diver. In a few moments they were in the cabin.

"Mercy on us, Pomp!" cried Frank. "What has happened to you?"

"Golly, Marse Frank," cried the darky, "de debbil git dis chile an' haul him off!"

"The devil!"

"Yes, sah! one ob dem big fish wid long spider legs, sah!"

"An octopus!" gasped Frank. "Where is it now?"

"Dunno, sah; done flink it git away into de sea."

And Pomp gave a graphic account of his experience with the octopus. Now that the danger was over all listened with interest.

It had been a close call for all. But they were once more safe aboard the Diver.

"We will look out not to get into the grip of another such creature," said Frank.

Pomp prepared a hearty repast for the wearied men.

They enjoyed it heartily and then Frank went into the pilot-house and sent the Diver to the surface.

"Bagnall," he cried, "have you had enough of the Yellow Sea?"

The explorer quickly replied:

"My work is done; I am satisfied."

"Then let us run down to Hong Kong and put ourselves under the protection of the American consul for a few days before going home."

"That will be jolly!" cried Bagnall. "Let us do it!"

The prospect of spending a few days on land, and especially in Hong Kong was a pleasant one.

So the boat was headed to the southeast. Frank kept her on the surface as she could sail faster there.

Out of the Yellow Sea at last the submarine boat passed.

The expedition had certainly been a success in more ways than one.

The cave of pearls had been found and a large treasure taken from it.

Also the treasure found aboard the sunken pirate was certainly more than sufficient to recompense them all.

So taken altogether the party had good cause for self congratulations. All were in high spirits.

And still the Diver kept on its way until one fine morning it sailed into Hong Kong harbor.

Its appearance created a decided sensation.

In a moment after crossing the bar, a huge Chinese war-ship came bearing down upon the Diver.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PIRATES—THE END.

FRANK was really undecided whether to run the risk of getting into close quarters with the Chinese cruiser or not.

He knew well enough the capricious character of the pig-tailed dignitaries at Hong Kong.

If it suited their Celestial tastes they might boldly confiscate the submarine boat as an alien vessel violating the treaty by invading the harbor without the protecting flag of any government!

So Frank felt a little shy.

He consulted Bagnall.

"What do you say, Sam?" he asked, "is it best for us to get to close quarters with those chaps?"

Sam was thoughtful.

He could see that as the Chinese warship approached her crew were at quarters and she was cleared for action.

"She looks warlike!" he declared.

"So I think."

"Upon my word, these Chinese are queer birds!"

"They are just as apt to confiscate our boat as not."

"Certainly."

Frank's mind was made up.

"I don't believe I'll risk it," he said.

"What will you do?" asked Sam.

Frank pointed to an American warship just across the harbor. The American flag was flying from her peak.

"I'll run over under the wing of our own government," he said;

"the dirty pigtailed won't dare to follow us there."

"A good idea," declared Sam, "but look out the Chinese don't call us down with a cannon ball."

Frank turned the head of the Diver to the westward! He pressed the motor lever.

She shot forward with increased speed. A mad yell came from the deck of the Celestial cruiser.

Then there was the rattle of chains, a puff of smoke, and a heavy report. A cannon ball plowed the water just in front of the Diver.

"By Jove they mean to take us!" cried Sam; "look out, Frank!"

Now the young inventor knew that he could easily vindicate himself in the eyes of the Chinese officers, but it would take time and bother.

To avoid all the consequent red tape, he was decided to run over under the lee of the American warship.

But the peremptory summons of the big warship could not be disregarded. However, Frank was decided how to treat it.

He sent Barney out to run up the American flag. This at once flaunted in the breeze.

Very likely there would have been no trouble, had not the submarine boat so strongly resembled a dynamite cruiser or torpedo boat.

The Chinese were convinced that the Diver was something of the sort.

The display of the American flag, however, had no effect whatever. Again a shot went skipping before the Diver's bows. Frank smiled and stepped into the gun-room.

He had no thought of issuing a challenge, but was resolved to give the Chinese an exhibition of his own power.

He slid a needle into the gun, and pointed it so to strike the water one hundred yards away.

Then he pulled the valve.

There was a recoil, and then—

Boom—boom!

The projectile was buried in the sea.

The impact exploded the dynamite, and up rose a column of water fifty feet high.

It fell with the roar of a cataract. It was evidence that terrific force was beneath it.

"I wonder what they'll think of that?" chuckled Frank.

He learned instantly.

A second roar like thunder filled the air.

The batteries of the Chinese cruiser belched flame and smoke.

Only the poor marksmanship of the Chinese gunners saved the Diver.

Shells and hot shot filled the water all around the submarine boat. But not a shot struck her.

It was the best of good fortune.

The Chinese were doubtless waiting for the smoke to clear away to see that their target had gone to the bottom.

Frank was determined not to disappoint them.

Knowing it to be the safest move he could make, he pressed the reservoir lever. The craft sank.

Down went the Diver and passed directly under the hull of the Chinese war vessel.

Frank at that moment could have blown the Chinese ship to splinters. But he did not care to do that.

He let the Diver run under water for perhaps half a mile.

Then he sent it to the surface. The American war-ship was quite near.

She was the *Saratoga* and her commander warmly welcomed Frank, for the young inventor was well known to him.

"So they tried to sink you, did they?" he cried. "Well, that's all the sense those heathen Chinese have anyway."

The Diver was drawn up alongside the *Saratoga*.

No further trouble was experienced.

As soon as the Chinese admiral learned of his mistake he sent over a profuse apology.

The American colony in Hong Kong received the submarine travelers most hospitably.

Three very enjoyable days were spent in the quaint Chinese city.

Then Frank said:

"Come, boys, we must get under way again. Now for home!"

Barney and Pomp were more than willing; they were anxious to get back to dear old Readstown.

And Sam Bagnall was not unwilling to get back to New York and realize on his pearls.

So the Diver left Hong Kong harbor with a salute from the men-of-war there, which was duly answered.

Then once more along the coast the submarine boat proceeded.

For several days the Diver kept on, and Frank had begun to have hopes of sighting Borneo.

One morning a fleet of Chinese vessels appeared directly in the path of the Diver.

Frank imagined that they were merchant or trading vessels until suddenly a terrible catastrophe occurred.

The Diver did not turn out for the Chinese fleet, but went sailing down through its midst.

Suddenly, when not fifty yards from one of the vessels, Bagnall let out a yell of alarm.

"Look out, Frank! They mean to hit us!"

Before Frank could act, however, he saw that the black flag had been run to the masthead of every vessel in the fleet.

Men armed to the teeth swarmed over the rail, ready to board their prey. False ports opened in the vessels' sides and guns were run out.

Before Frank could sink the Diver, a broadside was fired from the nearest pirate.

One solid shot passed completely through the reservoir of the Diver just above the water line.

To sink her now was impossible unless it was done permanently. Frank's face blanched with horror.

"My God!" he cried. "We are certainly lost. They will blow us out of the water."

"God help us!" groaned Sam. "What shall we do?"

They were directly in the midst of the pirate fleet.

To turn anyway was only to meet with guns. Frank hesitated only a moment.

"We must fight or die!" he cried, "that is our only hope!"

Instantly, with vengeful purpose, he rushed into the gun-room.

"I'll give a few of them all the fun they want!" he muttered.

He instantly trained the needle gun upon the nearest ship. He pressed the lever.

Boom! Crash!

The projectile struck the nearest vessel, and a terrific explosion followed. A hole many yards square was blown in the vessel's side.

She instantly heeled over and began to sink.

Her crew were paralyzed and began in terror to jump overboard. Frank was determined to show no mercy.

Quick as thought, he trained the gun upon another one of the pirate vessels. Again there was a fearful explosion.

The projectiles were fearful in their execution.

This second pirate vessel went to the bottom in three minutes with all on board.

But a shell exploded on the deck of the Diver, tearing away a section of the cabin and doing much damage.

"Revenge for that!" muttered Frank.

Right and left the deadly projectiles were sent. Wherever they struck death and disaster ensued.

Indeed the little Diver was in a fair way to exterminate the whole fleet when the distant boom of cannon was heard.

A vessel was approaching from the westward.

"It is the Saratoga!" cried Sam, as he studied her through a glass.

In face of such antagonists the remainder of the pirates took to their heels.

They managed to gain the estuary of a river, where the water was too shallow, and they were safe from pursuit save with the Diver.

But Frank did not pursue them.

Seven of the pirate vessels were at the bottom of the sea. This was havoc enough for the time.

The Saratoga quickly came up.

Explanations were in order, and then the commander said:

"We have been for a year looking for that gang of cut-throats. You punished them nobly, Mr. Reade."

"I don't believe they will trouble the Diver any more," said Frank. "At least, it will be costly for them if they do!"

But at this moment Barney came rushing on deck. He brought most direful news.

One of the solid shot had burst, and a fragment had torn its way through the bottom of the boat. She was filling fast.

Frank rushed down into the hold. He examined the leak with many fears.

His worst premonition was confirmed.

"The cruise of the Diver is ended," he said. "She is sinking fast."

"But can nothing be done to save her?" cried Sam.

"Nothing!"

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I do."

"What shall we do?"

"We will have to return to Hong Kong and go home in some other way. Look out!"

The warning came not a moment too soon. Water belched into the cabin. The Diver began to settle.

"My God! she is going down!" cried Sam Bagnall. "What can we do to save the treasure, Frank?"

"Nothing!" replied the young inventor, excitedly. "Save yourselves!"

They were even obliged to leap overboard and swim for their lives. But a boat from the Saratoga was already on the way.

They were picked up safely.

But the submarine boat went down into hundreds of feet of water. The Diver was lost forever.

The Saratoga took the Diver's party back to Hong Kong; here they were warmly received.

The effects and furnishings of the Diver were lost with her. Also the pirates' treasure.

The pearls recovered from the cave of pearls were saved, for each had worn them on his person.

These would net a goodly fortune and pay for the loss of the Diver. But all else was lost.

To attempt to recover the treasure on board the Diver, called for the construction of another submarine boat.

No man could descend to the depths into which the Diver had sunk. She was well lost.

Perhaps the most chagrined and disappointed of all was Sam Bagnall. He tried in vain to think of a method by which the treasure might be recovered.

There was none, and so the submarine boat continues to rest in its deep sea grave.

The party sailed for London on an English steamer. Thence they took an American steamer for New York.

The loss of the Diver was a great disappointment to Frank Reade, Jr., but he said:

"Never mind! My next invention shall beat it out and out."

Back in old Readestown, Barney and Pomp were happy again.

Frank went at once to work upon something new. What it turned out to be we shall be compelled to tell the reader in some future story.

The pearls netted a large fortune. Sam Bagnall returned to New York and getting married settled down.

But not one of the four submarine voyagers ever forgot the thrilling experiences which were theirs while searching for the cave of pearls—under the Yellow Sea.

[THE END.]

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